

JPRS: 4326

12 January 1961

BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON INDONESIAN ARMY OFFICERS

(Selected Translations)

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JPRS: 4326

CSO: 1188-S

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[Following are translations of articles on the above subject,
selected from Indonesian sources. Source information
accompanies each article.]

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LT. COLONEL BAHRUM RANGKUTI

[Following is the translation of an unsigned article in Abadi (The Century), Djakarta, 17 July 1960, page 1]

"Islam and the Arabian language can reactivate the soul of the Indonesian people, bogged down for centuries by Hindu religion and animism", this is the opinion of Lt. Col. Bahrum Rangkuti, B. A. (masters degree). It is the conclusion of his years of cultural studies.

To those interested in religious literature in general, the name Bahrum Rangkuti is not unknown, he is one of the leading literary men of Islam. In addition to his own creations, he has also translated many works of famous authors of Islam, e.g. Dr. Iqbal and others. His writings have indeed been read by many, but many do not know yet who this author and prince of Islam is.

When one reads the name Rangkuti, one guesses immediately that Bahrum hails from Tapanuli. Well, his father, Tasib Rangkuti, comes, of course, from South Tapanuli, but Bahrum himself was born in Galang (East Sumatra) on August 1919. After finishing the HBS [Hogere Burger School -- Dutch language Junior College] in Medan he proceeded to the AMS [Algemene Middelbare School -- Indonesian language Junior College] A I at Jogjakarta. Then he studied at the Faculty of Literature of the University of Indonesia, but it took him a long time because as a father Bahrum had to make a living as well as study. "I could only attend occasionally but passed my final examination", he said. A little later he became Head of Religious Affairs of the Navy with the rank of Lt. Col. He knows the following languages: Arabian, Dutch, English, German, French and Urdu.

Not only is his body tall and big, his soul is also great, and he is not afraid of danger or threat. "Of hunger, poverty and slander one should not be afraid", says he with great sincerity. He was imprisoned several times by the Japanese, as well as during the revolution. Under the Japanese he was imprisoned because he became a member of an "illegal" organization. During the revolution he smuggled jeeps and tires into the territory held by the Republic of Indonesia. He also edited pamphlets in Dutch, Urdu and Hindustani to sow panic in the ranks of the Allied Forces. When the Gurkha, Sikh and Mohammedan units fired at Indonesians during the revolution, he wrote a pamphlet in Urdu and Hindostani, as follows: "Brothers from the land of the Ganges and the Indus! You are bringing bullets and death in our midst, while we offer rice and food to you. Do you call it chivalrous when you expose us to sufferings and slavery while we, no matter how small our contribution, try very

hard to improve living conditions for our brothers in India and to free them from hunger and suffering? The Republic of Indonesia was then indeed helping India, which was threatened by hunger and famine, with rice. These pamphlets were naturally of great influence, and many Mohammedan soldiers of the Allied Forces surrendered their arms and ammunition to the fighters of Indonesia, or they aimed much too high when firing their rifles on several of the battle fronts.

Bahrum often originated expressions that made lasting impressions. His language was then emotional and full of tension. After independence, Bahrum's desire was to bring appreciation of the culture of Islam to all Indonesians. He wrote all kinds of prose, essays, poems, plays for radio and stage to awaken all Mohammedan literary men to the necessity of expressing the Koran in a beautiful and sincere manner. Many Mohammedan men and women love his lectures, but not a few oppose him and call him a heathen. After listening to Bahrum's play, Djabal An Nuur [mountain An Nuur, telling the story of the prophet Mohammed], a Mohammedan leader urged his readers to let the Caliph Umar r.a. [Rasul Allah-Ambassador of the Lord] come back to cut Bahrum's throat.

Bahrum just smiled when he read this incitement, and later he also wrote in the same newspaper: "May the Lord open the eyes of that Mohammedan leader to let Islam shine through the channels of art". Bahrum believes that for new insight in Islam one has to approach the subject from all directions. At the moment, as professor of the Al Djami'ah Al Islamyah and Lt. Col. of the navy he has to study a lot and think about problems of Islam. He has to broaden his knowledge of philosophy, sociology and psychology, and therefore he very often meets people who already know everything in one field.

When we visit him at home, we either find him with his books studying hard, or in lively conversation about Islam with his wife, Apul Batubara, who also loves religion and a life devoted to mankind. She is a midwife but also teaches the Koran and Arabian to several clubs. Bahrum also has a drugstore in Kebon Katjang and a private clinic in the Center of Islamic Culture at Tjipaput. On certain occasions he works the soil around the goldfish pond together with wife and children and plants pumpkins, green beans, and cucumbers.

He states: "Working with one's hands is a very important aspect of culture. We have forgotten these wise and useful gifts of the Lord for a long time."

At the moment he is still studying at the Literary Faculty of the University of Indonesia. He has trouble fitting all his tasks in and says: "My duties and work are many and I am forced to cut down on sleep and rest".

COLONEL R. A. KOSASIH

[Following is the translation of an unsigned article in Abadi (The Century), Djakarta, 4 October 1959, pages 1, 3]

This issue of Minggu Abadi focuses on a leader of APRI [Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia -- Army of the Republic of Indonesia] and commander of the Daswati I unit of the Province West Java, who in every-day life avoids extremes, performs his religious Mohammedan duties, and shows a fatherly attitude in his work.

Colonel R. A. Kosasih is 35 years of age and indeed beloved by and an inspiration for everybody in the army. He is indeed a humane and responsible soldier, always very considerate towards others. He likes to forgive, and shows great pity for all who suffer.

He was born about 35 years ago in the mountain city of Sukabumi. Before the Japanese came, he attended the AMS [Algemeen Middelbare School -- Dutch Indonesian Junior College]. When the Japanese army came, he moved to the SMT [Pembela Tanah Air -- a National Guard].

When the proclamation of independence was made to the world, young PETA leaders were made captains in the army of the Republic of Indonesia.

While the national revolution raged, he fought with all his heart together with his comrades in arms against the foreign army that wanted to subdue our fatherland once again.

During the Renville Treaty of 1948, he moved to Central Java and was promoted to battalion commander with the rank of major. During the Madiun revolution, he and his unit performed their duty and played no mean part in saving our country. The Dutch treacherously violated the Treaty and started their second military action. Major Kosasih took part in the famous "Long March" of the TNI [Tentara Nasional Indonesia -- Indonesian National Army].

He returned to the province where he was born and took up guerilla warfare against the Dutch until independence. He held then the position of province commander.

After independence he was promoted to command the Bogor Brigade with the higher rank of lieutenant colonel. In 1950 he joined the operation to erase what was called the "Republic of the South Moluccas". After that he was placed in command of the garrison of Kupang, and, beginning 1952, he became chief of staff and commander of TT VII [Military Territory VII]. At the end of that year he was transferred to MBAD [Mobil Brigade Angkatan Darat-Mobile Brigade of the Army] until 1956. Beginning in 1956 he was appointed chief of staff of TT II, and in March 1957 he was made commander of TT II. Finally, in the middle of this year, this son of Sukabumi was made commander of TT III.

This man, R. A. Kosasih, who has the rank of colonel, carries a heavy burden on his shoulders during this period of peace, has for years posed many problems. This heavy burden this young commander of the Siliwangi Division carries with a feeling of responsibility, and he looks upon it as a duty towards the fabulously beautiful country where he was born.

During a recent press conference, he said, among other things, that the armed forces of the country are not destined to destroy men and to become its enemy. They are to destroy men's passions that violate the laws of the country. Men's bad passions that go against peace and the welfare of the people are therefore the enemy of the armed forces as well as of the people.

When we ponder his sayings, they surely look like the opinion of somebody with love for humanity who wishes everybody to suppress his bad impulses and live exemplarily. As far as the problem of peace in his area is concerned, Col Kosasih replied that in addition to increasing the coordination of combat operations, operations of the territory would have to be increased to full power. He meant taking care of political stability and increasing the efficiency of the government to raise the economic and social standards of the population.

As a soldier he acts with great forcefulness where force is needed. But as a Moslem who takes his religious duties seriously he treats everybody well, be it friend or enemy. It is a fact that he once found a badly wounded terrorist somewhere in west Java. With great humanity he himself took care of the terrorist as a father, full of pity for a naughty child. It may be this fine attitude that has always provided him with the protection of the Lord, e.g. it is known that he was almost slain by the insurrectionists in Tapanuli Province some time ago. But the Lord protected his faithful child.

In his everyday life he is a good husband and father of five children. One of them died several years ago in Makasar.

Although he is an officer of the army, he is also able to fly a plane. This, soccer and fencing are his hobbies.

Col Kosasih does not like it at all when his merits and his struggle are mentioned. It was therefore difficult to get him as feature subject of Minggu Abadi, because we were unable to find him and ask his consent. His charming manners and sympathetic disposition made us forget this difficulty. With the indeed incomplete and fragmentary information at our disposition we introduced this child of beautiful Parahiangan [West Java] to the faithful readers of Minggu Abadi. We hope that the hero of this article of Minggu Abadi will forgive us our intrusion.

LT COLONEL HARSONO

[Following is the translation of an article in Abadi
(The Century), Djakarta, 1 November 1959, pages 1, 3]

To the readers of this weekly, Lt Colonel Harsono is certainly not unknown. He is the former head of the Army Information Center, and only recently traded offices with his successor, Lt Colonel Suparjo, because he was assigned to study at Kursus B [Course B] (formerly the SSKAD [abbreviation unexplained in source]) in Bandung. In 1945, in Solo, Lt Colonel Harsono eagerly entered military life at the outbreak of the revolution for freedom. He began as captain in Division 10, which was under the command of the late Purbonegoro. Next he is mentioned as being in Semarang, under the military governor of the Soli-Pati-Semarang area, Pak Gatot Subroto. After independence was gained, he was stationed in Semarang as Information Chief of the Djawa Tengah [Central Java] Division. In September 1955, he was appointed assistant chief of Penad [Pusat Penerangan Angkatan Darat -- Army Information Center] by the assistant of KSAD [abbreviation unexplained in source], at that time Colonel Zulkifi Lubis. Colonel Rudy Pirngadi was chief of Penad at the time. When Col Rudy [sic] received another appointment, Harsono took his place as chief of Penad until 28 October 1959.

During the ceremony when Harsono took over as chief of Penad, Major General Gatot Subroto expressed his satisfaction with the work of Lt Colonel Harsono. He praised his quick grasp of the secrets of information, coming from within as well as from outside the army. Information work and meeting the press has, of course, become everyday work for Lt Colonel Harsono; he may even be called an expert at this, because during the revolutionary period, in the Angkatan Muda [Youth Movement] organization, he was not only vice-chairman, but also chairman of the Information Department; next he became Coordinator of the Information Department of the Military Government, Information Chief of the Djawa Tengah Division, assistant chief of Central Army Information, and finally Chief of Central Army Information.

In his relations with press correspondents (who surround him daily in great numbers), he has shown wisdom, and succeeded in establishing excellent mutual understanding. He is by nature serious, yet flexible. When asked about his youth, he said he was born in the city of Pati, east of the city of Kudus (Central Java) in January 1920. He said that his late father was a teacher of great learning. Jokingly he said: "What a pity that I cannot even come close to the knowledge of my father".

He entered the world of the National Movement at an early age. When he was eight years old he became a scout of H. W., Subsequently the K.B.I. [abbreviations not explained in source]. After the

Suryawirawan was formed, he became active within its ranks and even became chairman for the whole area of Surakarta. In this connection we mention among others Lt Col Darjatmo, the former Lt Col Ahmad Fadjar and Major Ranuwidjojo, formerly all members of the leading circle of the Suryawirawan. So young Harsono became a true nationalist, who did not want to collaborate with the Dutch nor with the Japanese government. Lt. Col Harson, at the time not particularly tall or heavy, was married in 1947, and was fortunately blessed with eight children, boys and twin girls. We don't know whether the amount of work that faces him or the number of children, cause him to be comically confused. When he takes them to the doctor and the latter asks the name of a particular child, he becomes confused because he has forgotten its name as well as its age.

As far as education is concerned, he explains that his did not follow the usual course, because he only attended the SMA [Sekolah Menengah Atas -- Junior College] in recent years and passed his finals in 1952 in Semarang. Then he studied the Indonesian Language and history for a year in Semarang, and terminated that because he had to move to Djakarta. His military schooling was likewise only incidental and consisted mostly of self study. His bookshelf, however, is always filled with books because he loves to read, especially sociology. With the study assignment just received, he considers himself very lucky because it meets his desire to pursue his studies. He also mentions that his career as a soldier will be decided by his education, especially in these days of technology and awakening.

We now leave Lt Col Harsono, and all the personnel of Minggu Abadi and Harian Abadi pray that his career will lead Lt Col Harsono to future success and that he will become an even wiser and more mature person. We learn that on the seventh of this month he will already be in Bandung and we wish him a good trip and good luck in his studies.